

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 – 35 (Cancelled)

36. (Previously Presented) A method for moving a plurality of wafers, comprising:
positioning a plurality of end-effectors of a robotic hand adjacent an opening of a first wafer receptacle having a plurality of wafers arrayed therein, wherein the plurality of end-effectors also include a plurality of blades;
inserting the hand into the first wafer receptacle;
mechanically grasping a selected number of wafers by a corresponding number of blades;
withdrawing the hand from the first wafer receptacle;
positioning the hand adjacent an opening of a second wafer receptacle;
inserting the hand into the second wafer receptacle; and
releasing the selected number of wafers into the second wafer receptacle.

37. (Original) The method of claim 36 wherein the selected number of wafers is one of one, two, three, four, or five wafers.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, further comprising sensing the presence of the selected number of wafers on the plurality of end-effectors in the first wafer receptacle.

39. (Original) The method of claim 38 wherein sensing the presence and position of the plurality of wafers comprises sensing a wafer peripheral zone proximate the hand.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39 wherein sensing the presence and position of wafer comprises detecting a displacement of a wafer contact pad when said wafer contact pad contacts a wafer peripheral zone.

41. (Original) The method of claim 39 wherein optically sensing the wafer comprises optically detecting a displacement of a wafer contact pad when said wafer contact pad contacts a wafer peripheral zone.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein sensing the presence and position of the plurality of wafers comprises optically sensing a wafer peripheral zone of each wafer proximate the hand.

43. (Original) The method of claim 36 wherein mechanically grasping a selected number of wafers comprises mechanically grasping each wafer only at a peripheral zone thereof.

44. (Original) The method of claim 36 wherein releasing the selected number of wafers comprises arraying the wafers in the second wafer receptacle.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein the robotic hand is structured to retain one or more grasped wafers during multi-planar movement.